

Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Oil & Gas Development Potential Near and Within Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

Issue

Renewed interest in oil and gas development near and potentially within Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site (NHS) is an emerging issue. Within the past several years, drill rigs and new production sites have come into view of the park's primary interpretive site.

Oil and gas development is an industrial activity that depending on its intensity and distance from the park, could dominate and detract from the cultural and natural landscape so vital to interpretation and commemoration of the Sand Creek Massacre.

Background

Sand Creek is located in southeast Colorado in Kiowa County. The Site memorializes and interprets that massacre of nearly 160 peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho people in 1864.

Geologically, Sand Creek Massacre NHS lies on an oil and gas play known as the Las Animas Arch. The long history of oil and gas activity includes sporadic discoveries and development of traditional sandstone and limestone reservoirs. Several wells have been drilled, produced, and eventually capped in what is now Sand Creek Massacre NHS. Further exploration and production of these conventional resource plays will most likely continue. Prediction of the level of development of the shale formations that are present in the Las Animas Arch is more difficult. Shales containing oil and gas have been the subject of intense development across the country including the Niobrara Shale in northeastern Colorado. Horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing have made many shale formations economic to develop. The Atoka and Cherokee shales in Kiowa County and neighboring counties are geologically less attractive, but have sparked leasing interest. Though the widespread and frenetic development that has engulfed other areas does not appear imminent near Sand Creek Massacre NHS, improving economics and technologies could make the shale plays here viable.

Thus, now is the time for the National Park Service and its partners to work with local landowners and agencies to plan for future petroleum development so that it might occur in a way that helps protect Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.



Advances in technology, buoyed by higher product prices, have industry taking new looks in areas of historical oil and gas production. Photo: Typical Niobrara Shale drilling operation in northeastern Colorado.



Located in one of the most sparsely developed areas of Colorado, it is easy to imagine the site of the Sand Creek Massacre as it was nearly 150 years ago. That could change with future oil and gas development, depending on the level of activity and its location relative to the Historic Site. Photo: View north from the monument.

Current Steps

Sand Creek Massacre management is taking steps to help decrease or avoid impacts from oil and gas development in and around the Site. These steps include:

- Coordination with NPS central and regional offices to obtain technical and regulatory assistance to identify and mitigate potential cross-boundary impacts.
- Provide information to local landowners and decision makers to increase understanding of the historical significance of the Sand Creek Massacre as well as strategies to reduce the effects of oil and gas development on the Site's resources.
- Facilitate efforts to better integrate NPS conservation mandates into the oil and gas development permitting efforts of other federal, state, and local agencies.

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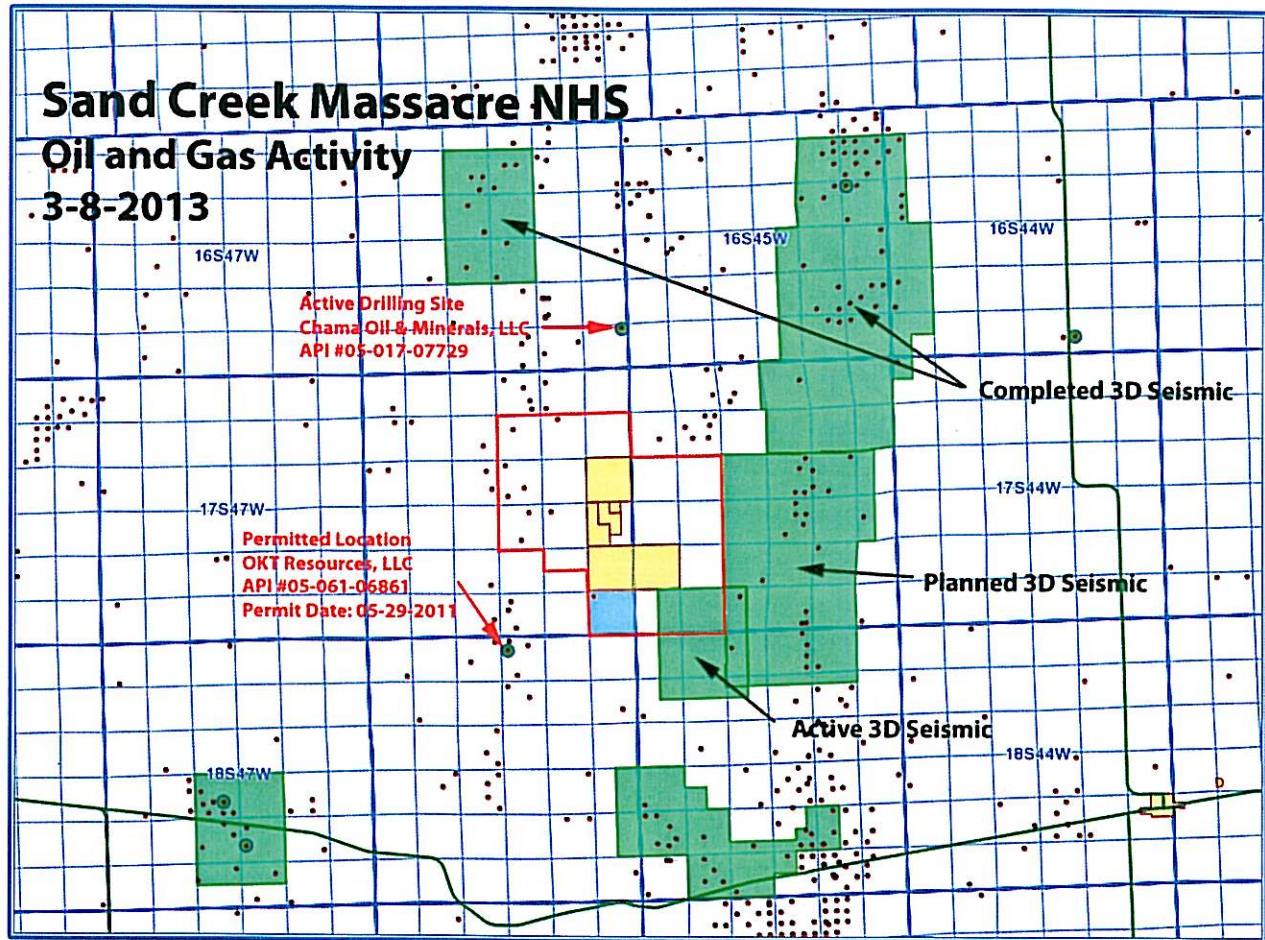
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Sand Creek Massacre NHS

Oil & Gas Activity as of 3-8-2013



Active operations include 1) a 3D seismic operation, a portion of which lies within the administrative boundary of SAND, and 2) a drilling operation a little over 5 miles directly north of the Monument and Overlook area.

The seismic operations are being conducted by Tideland Geophysical on behalf of Mud Drilling. The Kern State 36-16-46 well is a horizontal well being drilled on a state lease. Chama Oil is the operator and the target zone is Spergen Dolomite. The permits did not include any proposed hydraulic fracturing.